NEWS

Studio on the Common changes its model to full-fledged K-2 after school program

CHRIS STEVENS | CORRESPONDENT

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Studio on the Common is offering an after school arts program for kids in grades K-2. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/CHRIS STEVENS

Last spring, Gail Ockerbloom began hearing about a shortage of
school programs aimed at kids in grades K-2 in Winchester – so s

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decided to do something about it.

"We're changing our model," said the owner of Studio on the Common. "We're going from individual 90-minute art programs to a full-scale after school program."

With a bright, welcoming, lived-in studio that, as the name implies, looks over Winchester Common, Ockerbloom has offered school year programming and summer options for just shy of a decade now.

"We opened in October (2015)," she said. "We opened the store first, then the art studio then the pottery, one right after the other."

She said pivoting from the individual lessons to a group program isn't a big reach and even comes with some added benefits.

Due to space constraints, the program will be fairly small, capped at somewhere between 17 and 20 kids. With that size, Ockerbloom said she's excited at the thought of really getting to know the families as well as the kids and hopes to do a family focused event or two.

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It is not too late to register for the new after school arts program at Studio on the Common. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/CHRIS STEVENS

What to expect

"This is not babysitting," Ockerbloom said. "There are real artists the classes."

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In fact her director of art, Jean Wallace, is a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Art.

“Known as Miss Jean Bean, Jean boasts over 20 years of experience spanning public, private, and higher education art programs,” Okerbloom said.

She called Wallace a passionate advocate for community arts, a mentor and was one of nine educators who in May were honored at the State House for their teaching excellence.

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And, Ockerbloom added, Wallace would be supported by a team of artists experienced in delivering arts programming. She joked the youngsters wouldn’t be doing figure drawing, but said it’s also “not just about gluing popsicle sticks together” either.

She is keen on using quality canvases, paints and brushes, but is accepting the odd donations, like a large stash of beads or tiny glass jars used for a particular brand of French yogurt.

“We’ll use them for something,” Ockerbloom said with a broad smile. “If you went into the basement, you’d think we were hoarders.”

The program will run five days a week until 6 p.m. Ockerbloom said students can choose to come 2, 3, 4 or all 5 days. Kids will play outside for a bit to shake off the school day then spend 90 minutes working on specific art projects.

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For the remaining half hour or so, Ockerbloom said kids can wo
art of their choosing. And even though the program has officially started,

there is still room to register.

Ockerbloom said they hit a snag with the program launch when they couldn't get confirmation from the School Department that Studio on the Common would be a school bus stop option until the last week of school last June. That meant they couldn't advertise the program and "as a result, we're late to the party in getting people up to speed on what we have to offer this fall," she said.

But Ockerbloom is undeterred.

"It will be an amazing year," she said. "We're very excited."

For more information on Studio on the Common and the after school program, visit www.studioonthecommon.com.

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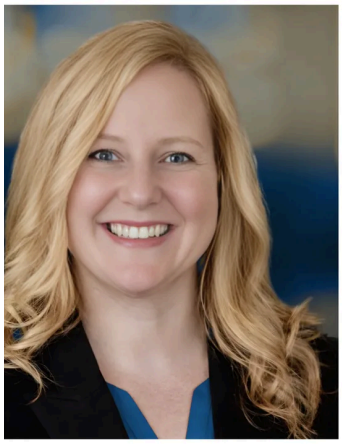

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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